

January 17, 2001

REQUIRED CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION FOR ALL VHA PHYSICIANS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive defines and reaffirms the requirement that all physicians complete and pass the Continuing Medical Education (CME) independent study "Medical Care of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury."

2. BACKGROUND: The Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders (SCI&D) Strategic Health Care Group (SHG), in collaboration with the Employee Education System (EES), developed a CME Program to ensure that VHA physicians are well informed regarding the specific conditions that may confront individuals with spinal cord injury and disorders. Greater general awareness of the specialized health issues facing persons with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) is needed to ensure therapeutically appropriate clinical decisions. This CME independent study (identified as EES's Booklet "Medical Care of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury" and anticipated as a module in the Veterans Healthcare Initiative) is one way the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can ensure provision of quality health care across the continuum extending from the point of access in any clinic or hospital setting to the availability of services in an SCI Center. Its purpose is to help health care professionals gain basic knowledge so that any clinical encounter is better informed and more comfortable for both the provider and the veteran. This educational activity will enhance the ability of VA physicians and other health care providers in improved management of the patient until a sub-specialist is available. ***NOTE:** A message from the Under Secretary for Health, a CME examination, and EES's 1998 Booklet, "Medical Care of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury," was forwarded to the Chief of Staff at each facility by the Office of Employee Education (102). Multiple copies of "Medical Care of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury" will be available in FY 2001 in all medical center facility libraries as a component of the Veterans Healthcare Initiative.*

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that all VHA physicians must complete and pass the independent study guide or VHI module "Medical Care of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury," by December 30, 2002. ***NOTE:** VHA's EES designates this continuing medical education activity for a maximum of 10 hours in Category I credit towards the American Medical Association (AMA) Physicians Recognition Award.*

4. ACTION VA Medical Center Directors are responsible for ensuring that this educational program is completed by at least 90 percent of all full-time, part-time, and intermittent VHA physicians by December 30, 2002. Chiefs of Staff may use the Academic Information Management (AIM) Center computer system to monitor their individual facility's training compliance through the end of Calendar Year 2000 for this SCI CME project. After January 1, 2001, facility training compliance will be monitored by submission of optical scanning answer and evaluation sheets to the Birmingham, AL, EES Center responsible for the Veterans Health Initiative (VHI).

5. REFERENCES: None.

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2002

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January 17, 2001

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Consultant for the SCI Strategic Health Care Group is responsible for the contents of this directive. Questions may be referred to (206) 768-5401.

7. RECISSIONS: This VHA Directive will expire on December 30, 2002.

S/ Tom Sanders for
Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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